

Listing of Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listing, of claims in the application.

1. (Currently Amended) A method for playing a wagering game having a special payout, the method comprising:

presenting a basic game having a plurality of randomly selected outcomes being selected independently of player selection, the randomly selected outcomes including a special-payout outcome;

accepting a basic wager from a player for the basic game between a minimum and maximum amount;

presenting an additional, separate side-wager option for a player to place an additional side-wager distinct from the accepted basic wager, the side-wager option requiring a side-wager amount in addition to the accepted basic wager;

in response to a player not choosing the side-wager option, providing the player with a first probability greater than zero of achieving the special-payout outcome;

in response to the player choosing the side-wager option, providing the player with a second probability of achieving the special-payout outcome, the second probability being greater than the first probability;

conducting the basic game with the first probability if the player does not choose the side-wager option, or the second probability if the player chooses the side-wager option; and

in response to conducting, crediting the player the special payout when the special-payout outcome occurs in the basic game.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising crediting the player a second and third payout when, respectively, a second and third randomly selected outcome occurs in the basic game.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the special payout is a progressive payout contributed to by a plurality of gaming machines including a gaming machine playing the wagering game.
4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the special payout is a bonus game.
5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the plurality of randomly selected outcomes are indicated by a plurality of symbols.
6. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein each of the plurality of symbols is a card from a deck of playing cards.
7. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein the wagering game is a slot machine and each of the plurality of symbols is a reel symbol.
8. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein providing the player with a second probability of achieving the special-payout outcome comprises increasing the number of winning symbols in the plurality of symbols.
9. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein providing the player with a second probability of achieving the special-payout outcome comprises modifying the method the wagering game uses to read the plurality of symbols.
10. (Currently Amended) A method for playing a wagering game on a gaming terminal, the wagering game having a progressive payout, the method comprising:
 - presenting a basic game having a plurality of randomly selected outcomes being selected independently of player selection, the randomly selected outcomes including a progressive-payout outcome;
 - accepting a basic wager from a player for the basic game between a minimum and maximum amount;

presenting an additional, separate side-wager option for a player to place an additional a side wager distinct from the accepted basic wager, the side-wager option requiring a side-wager amount in addition to the accepted basic wager;

presenting a first spinning reel, the first spinning reel providing the player with a first probability greater than zero of achieving the progressive-payout outcome;

presenting a second spinning reel, the second spinning reel providing the player with a second probability of achieving the progressive-payout outcome, the second probability being greater than the first probability; and

in response to the player selecting the side-wager option, substituting the second spinning reel for the first spinning reel, increasing the player's probability of winning the progressive payout.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10, wherein the substituting step is performed by a controller in the gaming terminal.

12. (Currently Amended) A gaming terminal for playing a wagering game having a special payout with a first payout and a second payout, the gaming terminal comprising

a basic game having a randomly selected outcome being selected independently of player selection;

a basic wager input accepting a basic wager from a player for the basic game on at least one of a plurality of paylines, the basic wager being between a minimum and maximum amount;

the gaming terminal having two options for being eligible for the special payout, the two options including (i) an additional, separate side-wager input option for placing an additional a side-wager distinct from the accepted basic wager, the side-wager option requiring a side-wager amount in addition to the accepted basic wager and (ii) a max-wager option for placing the basic wager at the maximum amount resulting in wagers on each of the plurality of paylines;

wherein, in response to selection of either of the two options, the gaming terminal awards the player the first payout when a first randomly selected outcome is achieved in the basic game and the gaming terminal awards the player the second payout when a second randomly selected outcome is achieved in the basic game; and

wherein if neither of the two options is selected, the gaming terminal does not award the player the first payout when the first randomly selected outcome is achieved in the basic game and does not award the player the second payout when the second selected outcome is achieved in the basic game.

13. (Original) The terminal of claim 12, wherein the special payout is one of a progressive jackpot and a bonus game jackpot.

14. (Cancelled)

15. (Original) The terminal of claim 12, wherein the side-wager option is a button or a key.

16. (Original) The terminal of claim 12, wherein the first and second randomly selected outcomes comprise a plurality of symbols.

17. (Original) The terminal of claim 16, wherein each of the plurality of symbols is a card from a deck of playing cards.

18. (Original) The terminal of claim 16, wherein the gaming terminal is a slot machine and each of the plurality of symbols is on a slot reel.

19. (Original) The terminal of claim 12, in combination with at least one other gaming terminal for conducting wagering games, each of the gaming terminals having the two options for being eligible for the special payout, the gaming terminals further comprising signage located above and coupled to the gaming terminals, the signage displaying the special payout and for receiving a signal from one of the gaming terminals that the gaming terminal is eligible to win a special payout, the gaming terminals and the signage being a gaming system.

20. (Original) The gaming system of claim 19, wherein the signage includes a signage controller for controlling an outcome of the special payout on one of the gaming terminals.

21. (Original) The gaming system of claim 20, wherein each of the plurality of gaming terminals includes a gaming terminal controller, the gaming terminal controller being in communication with the signage controller.

22. (Original) The gaming system of claim 19, wherein each of the plurality of gaming terminals are identical machines.

23. (Original) The gaming system of claim 19, wherein the special payout is a progressive payout.

24. (Original) The gaming system of claim 19, wherein the first payout is a bonus game payout.

25. (Currently Amended) A gaming terminal for playing a wagering game, comprising:

a basic game having a plurality of symbols that indicate a randomly selected outcome of the basic game, the randomly selected outcome being selected independently of player selection, the basic game also having a plurality of paylines;

a progressive payout having a first payout;

a basic wager input to accept a basic wager from a player for the basic game between a minimum and maximum amount, the maximum amount resulting in wagers applied to each of the plurality of paylines; and

a side-wager input device for allowing a player to place an additional, separate side-wager distinct from the accepted basic wager, the side-wager option requiring a side-wager amount in addition to the accepted basic wager;

wherein the gaming terminal presents the player with two independent options to be eligible for the progressive payout, the two independent options including (i) the player placing the side-wager via the side-wager input device and (ii) the player placing the maximum amount of the basic wager;

wherein, in response to either of the two options being chosen, the gaming terminal awards the player the first payout when a first randomly selected outcome is achieved and wherein if neither of the two options is chosen, the gaming terminal does not award the player the first payout when the first randomly selected outcome is achieved.

26. (Cancelled).

27. (Previously Presented) The gaming terminal of claim 25, the progressive payout further having a second payout and wherein, in response to either of the two options being chosen, the gaming terminal awards the player the second payout when a second randomly selected outcome is achieved.

28. (Currently Amended) A method for playing a wagering game having a special payout, the method comprising:

conducting a basic game having a plurality of randomly selected outcomes selected independently of player selection;

accepting a basic wager from a player for the basic game between a minimum and maximum amount, the maximum amount resulting in a wager on each of a plurality of paylines;

presenting an additional, separate side-wager option for a player to place a side-wager distinct from the accepted basic wager, the side-wager option requiring a side-wager amount in addition to the accepted basic wager; and

in response to the player selecting either the side-wager option or the maximum amount of the basic wager, crediting the player the special payout when a special-payout outcome occurs in the basic game, and wherein if neither the side-wager option nor the maximum amount of the basic wager is selected, the gaming terminal does not credit the player the special payout when the special-payout outcome occurs in the basic game.

29. (Currently Amended) A gaming terminal for playing a wagering game having a special payout, the gaming terminal comprising:

a basic game having a plurality of randomly selected outcomes being selected independently of player selection, the randomly selected outcomes including a special-payout outcome that awards the special payout;

a basic wager input accepting a basic wager from a player for the basic game between a minimum and maximum amount;

a side-wager input device to accept an additional, separate side-wager distinct from the accepted basic wager, the side-wager option requiring a side-wager amount in addition to the accepted basic wager;

wherein in response to a player not making a side-wager distinct from the basic wager, the gaming terminal providing the player with a first probability greater than zero of achieving the special payout; and

in response to the player making a side-wager distinct from the basic wager, the gaming terminal providing the player with a second probability of achieving the special-payout outcome, the second probability being higher than the first probability, and the gaming terminal further crediting the player the special payout if the special-payout outcome occurs.

30. (Previously Presented) The gaming terminal of claim 29, wherein the special payout is a progressive jackpot.

31. (Previously Presented) The gaming terminal of claim 29, wherein the special payout is a bonus game jackpot.

32. (Previously Presented) The gaming system of claim 29, wherein the plurality of randomly selected outcomes are indicated by a plurality of symbols.

33. (Previously Presented) The gaming terminal of claim 32, wherein each of the plurality of symbols is a card from a deck of playing cards.

34. (Previously Presented) The gaming terminal of claim 32, wherein each of the plurality of symbols is a standard slot machine symbol.

35. (Previously Presented) The gaming terminal of claim 32, wherein the number of symbols comprising the special-payout outcome in the plurality of symbols is increased when the side-wager option is chosen.

36. (Previously Presented) The gaming terminal of claim 32, wherein the gaming terminal alters its method of evaluating the plurality of symbols to increase the second probability of a winning outcome.

37. (Previously Presented) The gaming terminal of claim 27, wherein in response to the side-wager input device being activated, the gaming terminal awards the player a third payout when a third randomly selected outcome is achieved.